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ABSTRACT

Czech and Slovak journalism, which began with the revolutionary press of 1848 and 1849, became a dominant force in cultural and political life, after a brief repressive period in the 1850s. This study traces the evolution of modern Czechoslovak journalism from 1848 to February 1948, when the Communist party's rise to power forced a change in its orientation and mission. The first section deals specifically with the establishment of press traditions, and with growth and activism until the end of the First Republic in 1938. The second section focuses on the Communist party press, its origins, and the conflicts which arose from its given task, to reorient the nation toward a new political and socioeconomic course. Journalism is shown to have been an important weapon, utilized by an activist intelligentsia in the struggle against tyranny, absolute rule, and suppression of basic human rights. (JM)

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The Czech and Slovak Press: The First 100 Years

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Introduction

THE CREATION of Czechoslovakia as a nation-state in 1918, and the simultaneous evolution of its press system, was the culmination of numerous interrelated developments which unfolded during the course of European history following the arrival of the industrial age. Although the most noteworthy trends in the historic Bohemian Crown lands of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia began with the dawn of the Nineteenth century, until the uprising of June, 1848 (the birthyear of nationalism in Central Europe), these trends paralleled more in spirit than overt actions the revolutionary fervor evident throughout the rest of Europe.

During the first half of the Nineteenth century, a resurgence of romantic nationalism arose among the Czechs and Slovaks, a movement guided by a vanguard of patriotic intellectuals who wished to impart to their fellow countrymen the long suppressed Czech and Slovak cultural heritage and, when the need arose, provided them with political awareness and guidance. Through this group of individuals, most of whom were closely associated with periodicals and journals, the population gained political acumen and a sense of national history, both important for the later formation of the Czechoslovak state.

Utilizing the one common factor which had not been totally suppressed by pressures of Germanization and Magyarization—the spoken language—these intellectuals expanded and purified the vernacular into a standardized literary form which they then employed to reawaken the people's latent sense of self-identity and national consciousness. Meanwhile, the slowly emerging middle class—with its growing nationalism, hatred of Prince Metternich's administration, and realization that absolutism and feudalism had to be abolished in order to further political, economic and cultural development—provided forces toward change in the feudal Habsburg Empire.

The revolutionary struggle of 1848-49 that followed ended in defeat for the Czech reformers and brought a return of Austrian absolutism for the ensuing decade. Yet the reformist ideas which the revolutionary movement had inspired and the awakened national consciousness remained. To this must also be added the two principal achievements of the revolutionary turmoil: the peasantry's emancipation and the accompanying reorganization of the Empire's central administration and economic life. These changes paved the way for further modernization and industrialization, which became most evident in the Czech lands.

The spirit of revolution soon subsided to a level of practical realism or, as some have observed, opportunism, and radicalism changed to reformism. This meant the outward acceptance of the Austrian system, including all its negative aspects, and the adoption of a realistic approach toward improvement from within.

With a few notable exceptions, this lack of militancy has prevailed throughout Czechoslovakia's existence. For, whenever under the domination (direct or implicit) of an external power, the people have adapted themselves to the imposed system and, never losing sight of their national heritage and liberal Western orientation, have worked internally toward reform. The spirit which pervaded the national movement of the last century and the reform movement during the 1960s is a striking case in point.

Accompanying the national renaissance was the rise of modern Czech and Slovak journalism which, while arrested by the resurgent Austrian absolutism of the 1850s, began anew during the following decade. Building on the foundation established by the revolutionary press of 1848-49, the print media, especially the Czech press, soon became a dominant force in cultural and political life. This prominent position of journalism was reaffirmed during the interwar period, 1918-38, when the press helped the nation through its arduous initial phase of statehood.

Meanwhile, the founding of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) in 1921 led to the emergence of a Communist press which became actively engaged in discussions concerning national affairs. Two significant factors contributed to the rise of an active Party press: 1) During the interwar period, the KSC was a legal political party which participated (in form if not in spirit) in the Republic's parliamentary system of government. 2) Among the

Party's supporters was a large segment of the intelligentsia, many of whom became closely associated with Communist or leftist publications.

In the late 1920s, however, the KSC was taken over by a new radical leadership which was directly influenced by the Communist International (Comintern). The resulting change in the Party's orientation was reflected in the press, which was forcibly fashioned into a Comintern spokesman and, following the war, helped the KSC in its struggle to achieve total power.

It is the purpose of this study to trace the evolution of modern Czechoslovak journalism from its emergence during the political ferment of 1848 to the forced change in its orientation and mission which accompanied the Communist Party's rise to power in Czechoslovakia in February, 1948. While the first section deals specifically with the establishment of press traditions, growth and activism until the end of the First Republic (1938), the second focuses on the Communist Party press, its origins and the conflicts which arose out of its given task to reorient the nation toward a new political and socio-economic course.

The study shows that, from its difficult beginnings, journalism in Czechoslovakia has been an important weapon – at times the only one – utilized by an activist intelligentsia in the continued struggle against tyranny, absolute rule and suppression of basic human rights. By so doing, this monograph helps to explain more fully the press activism which has been repeatedly evident in this small but historically significant European state, one critically situated between East and West.

The Formative Years

MODERN Czech and Slovak journalism, compared to that of Great Britain, France, Germany or the United States, was a late arrival within the broad sphere of social communications. Its emergence began during the fourth decade of the last century when the spirit of revolution was sweeping Europe. The politically turbulent atmosphere which served as the impetus for its growth left a lasting mark on the nation's press, best reflected in the activist character and reformist nature dominating its pages. But it was not until the second half of the 1840s that there appeared Czech- and Slovak-language newspapers which adopted the fundamental concepts of modern journalistic practice and may thus be classified as independent organs (as opposed to their government sanctioned predecessors).

An exception in Bohemia to this general trend was *Prazske noviny* (Prague News), whose origin can be traced to February, 1719, and whose coverage included political events. This became especially evident when Karel Havlicek was made editor at the start of 1846. It is largely to Havlicek's credit as a journalist that after his first year as editor the paper not only enlarged its format but also increased its subscribers from 200 to 1,500.[1] However, being primarily a voice of the Austrian administration and published only twice weekly, the *Prazske noviny* of this period cannot be considered a paper which fully served its Czech readers, one which they could regard as their own.

An early attempt also was made to maintain a Slovak-language newspaper when Daniel Tallyai published the first issue of his *Prespurske noviny* (Pressburger News) on July 1, 1783, in what is now Slovakia's capital city of Bratislava. But a lack of subscribers forced Tallyai to abandon the venture four years later. Some 25 years elapsed before the next Slovak paper, *Tydennik* (Weekly),

appeared in 1812. This lack of support can be attributed to the fact that Slovakia's middle class was as yet too weak, both numerically and financially, to sustain its own newspaper.[2] Thus, until spring 1848, representative organs of national journalism consisted primarily of entertainment, literary, humor and specialized publications.

The most widely circulated Czech publications supplying light reading and enjoyment were *Ceska vcela* (Czech Bee) and *Kvety ceske* (Czech Blossoms), while *Svetozor* (World Outlook) was a popular illustrated magazine styled after the German "penny press" and the French *magazin pittoresque*.[3] Its publisher was Pavel J. Safarik, a scholar and a leading figure of the cultural revival.

The first scholarly journal intended for the Czech intelligentsia was *Krok* (Step),[4] which was published irregularly and with a few lengthy interruptions from the beginning of 1821 until April, 1840. The most significant academic publication of the period, however, was *Casopis Ceskeho museum* (Journal of the Czech Museum), popularly referred to as *Musejnik*. Founded in 1827, the quarterly was the inspiration of historian and political leader Frantisek Palacky, its first editor, and for several decades was considered the central organ of Czech scholarship. To these periodicals must also be added the religious press, represented for the most part by publications of the Roman Catholic church.

While the above-mentioned publications did not as a rule deal with political topics and were not chronicles of current events *per se*, they nevertheless helped to educate the Czech-speaking people. They served as the main channel for broadening the cultural revival, primarily among members of the middle class and the semi-literate workers who began to settle in cities and towns during the 1830s and 1840s.

The periodicals devoted to fiction and general reading entertainment especially afforded their editors and contributors, including many prominent essayists, poets and scholars, the opportunity to popularize the reviving Czech literary language and to make readers aware of Slavic history, literature and scholarship. This, then, was the journalistic atmosphere prior to the revolutionary movement of 1848 when a succession of events, namely the fall of Prince Metternich's administration and the imperial decree of

March 15, 1848, abolishing censorship, brought a new epoch in the history of Czech and Slovak journalism.

Revolution and the Press

The Revolutionary spirit permeating Europe had stimulated an acute hunger for political news which, with the end of censorship, editors of existing and the growing number of newly founded Czech papers attempted to satisfy. The new trend was established in the main by Havlicek who, upon leaving *Prazske noviny*, began publishing the first Czech-language daily, *Narodni noviny* (National News), on April 5, 1848. Other dailies soon followed his example, while existing periodicals, including *Musejnik* and *Ceska vcela*, began publishing articles concerning both domestic and foreign political events. By the end of the year, 37 political newspapers and periodicals were being published in the Bohemian capital. This included 20 in Czech and 17 in German.[5]

A special feature of the Prague scene of this period was that some newspapers printed both Czech-and German-language editions. Thus the evening paper *Pozor* (Beware) also appeared as *Habt Acht*, and the dailies *Svornost* (union), *Rychlik z Cech* (Express from Bohemia) and *Vlastimil* (Patriot) were also published as *Concordia*, *Eilbote aus Bohmen* and *Patriot*, respectively. *Bohemia* included articles in both languages. In Prague alone, 66 periodicals (in both Czech and German) were published at the end of 1848.[6] This made the city one of the largest press centers in the Austrian Empire, second only to Vienna itself.

The individual primarily responsible for unifying the existing Slovak dialects into a uniform written language during this period was Ludovit Stur, a teacher, journalist and writer who soon established himself as a leader of the younger generation of Slovak patriots. "His motivations were chiefly political: the new language was to unite all Slovaks, both Catholic and Protestant, and to mobilize them against the increasingly fierce campaign of Magyarization to which they were being subjected."[7]

Between 1845 and 1848, Stur was publisher and editor of *Slovenskje narodne noviny* (Slovak National Newspaper) which became the chief voice of Slovakia's national awakening. In the absence of any organized political party or group, Stur and his

paper provided the necessary leadership for the 1848 revolutionary movement in Slovakia.[8]

The basic aim of the revolutionary movement in the Czech lands was to unite the Czech people and to eliminate all hurdles to their future development as a nation. But the attitude of social groups toward such problems forced the division of the politically awakening population into two basic camps, the middle class liberals and the radical democrats, each of which proclaimed their programs through their newly founded papers. And while Havlicek's *Narodni noviny* was soon recognized as the main organ of the liberals, there existed several newspapers which espoused the radical democrats' cause. But because the Slovaks were subjected to sustained denationalization pressures by the Magyars until the end of World War I (facilitated by the fact that the Slovaks were almost exclusively peasants who lacked the cohesive leadership generally found among the intelligentsia or the middle class with its economic base) their national movement was less forceful and effective than that which developed among the Czechs. It should be recalled, moreover, that the Slovaks had been ruled since the Tenth century by the Magyars who, though a minority in the Hungarian lands, represented the propertied and educated class. Thus, the experience of the Slovaks within the Habsburg Empire was quite different from that of their Czech neighbors to the west in Moravia and Bohemia. This difference between the Slovaks and the more industrialized and advanced Czechs was to cause a lasting strain in their relations once they formed their own nation in 1918, a strain being felt to this day.

The most prominent of these was *Prazsky vecerni list* (Prague Evening Page), first published in June, 1848, under the editorship of Jan Knedlhans-Liblinsky. With a press run of 5,000, it was the most widely circulated paper of the period.[9] The paper's staff often engaged in polemics with Havlicek and acquainted its readers with the ideals of utopian socialism.

Other important publications of the radical democrats were *Noviny Lipy slovenske* (Newspaper of the Slavic Linden Tree), published for less than six months by an association of the same name, and *Obcanske noviny* (Citizen News), founded by editor-publisher Emanuel Arnold in November, 1848. Published four times weekly until its demise the following May, the latter paper's

influence was strongest in rural areas, due to its concern with problems of the peasantry, especially small landholders and the village poor.

One of the basic aims of the newly established political press was to inform and educate its readers in the broadest possible terms. The program *Noviny Lipy slovenske* outlined in its first issue was typical of existing editorial policies. The article first stressed the need to develop journalism to the highest possible level, then continued: "We [the Czech nation] do not have books about politics, about the national economy, about jurisprudence, etc. It is the periodical which has to fill this gap and to instigate our men of letters to concern themselves with providing the nation with a nutritious diet so that it may learn everything about the most important things in life."[10] It also was this paper which reprinted Mikhail Bakunin's famous "Appeal to the Slav peoples of a Russian patriot" written first in French at the end of 1848.[11]

The liberal wing of the middle class, led by Palacky and Havlicek, concerned itself primarily with the unity of the Czechs and their equality with the German-speaking population, all to be brought about under a constitutional monarchy. In short, theirs was a program of Austro-Slavism which supported the continuation of the Austrian Empire, but in a federalized form, as the unifying power in Central Europe. The radical democrats generally agreed with the liberals on the question of national unity, but went further in their demands for human rights and independent status outside Habsburg rule. They also sought the abolition of all privileges of the nobility and, being interested in social questions, advocated the removal of all remaining forms of feudalism.

The newly founded Czech papers generally followed the same course during the revolutionary movement. This was to laud and defend gains already made by the Czechs in the cultural area and to demand further opportunities for broadening their influence in political and economic fields. There existed basic differences among the papers, however, stemming from three interrelated factors: the diverse political attitudes of their editors, the varying interpretations of existing problems and possible solutions, and the different views expressed by the political groups with which the papers were associated.

At the onset of the movement, Havlicek supported the basic stance of the liberals and was their main publicist, even if he did not totally agree with their program. He, like Palacky, was primarily a humanist and realist who envisioned his main task to be that of leadership and education, not enticement. As Prof. Hans Kohn has written: "In Palacky and Havlicek the Czechs probably had at their disposal in the 1840s a leadership with a greater sense of reality, for sober facts and truthful restraint than that of any other continental people." [12]

But despite the efforts by such men as Palacky and Havlicek, and the high hopes and ideals expressed during the surging wave of nationalism, the revolution and accompanying concessions granted by the administration in Vienna were short-lived. Ten days after the first Pan-Slav Congress, which assembled in the Bohemian capital on June 2, 1848, and called for the restoration of Poland and national rights for the Slav peoples, revolutionary demonstrations were staged in Prague by young radicals. The demonstrations, led by students, precipitated the military occupation of the city, which, for all intents and purposes, ended all hopes for a political union of the Bohemian Crown lands and brought instead the political darkness that descended upon the Czechs and Slovaks for the ensuing decade.

Nonetheless, Havlicek continued to pursue his efforts and, especially, his self-imposed challenge to educate his countrymen politically even after many of his colleagues retreated from the political arena. Believing that the liberals had abandoned the struggle and, in effect, betrayed the people, he launched a personal campaign against the return of the status quo and in defense of human rights, freedom of expression above all.

With these changes in the political atmosphere, a serious effort was made by the Austrian authorities to suppress the opposition press. This was already evident in the decree of March 13, 1849, issued only a year after the abolition of censorship, which included as one of its main provisions the mandatory payment of a deposit, *kaution*, by all political publications. The *kaution* was to assure payment of any future fines which might be levied against a paper or periodical. And although Havlicek was among the few publishers who managed to secure the deposit by the May 4 deadline, the provision served its purpose well in that it forced

many political papers to cease publication or, as in the case of *Bohemia*, to become non-political.[13]

This was followed in June by the suspension of *Narodni noviny* for an indefinite period by the military regime in Prague, an action which Havlicek appealed successfully before the Ministry of the Interior in Vienna. But his victory was brief, for the daily was suspended permanently six months later. Undaunted, Havlicek founded *Slovan* (The Slav), which he began publishing May 8, 1850.

Issued twice weekly, the 32-page paper was printed in Kutna Hora and distributed by rail to other centers in the Czech lands. The popularity and influence of *Slovan* can perhaps best be seen in the Austrian regime's decision to publish a paper in direct opposition to it. Called *Vidensky dennik* (Vienna Daily), the paper was staffed, ironically, by some writers who had worked for Havlicek's *Narodni noviny*. The government paper strove to dilute *Slovan*'s influence and nationalistic appeal by attempting to show that it, too, was concerned with Czech problems. But the conciliatory approach adopted by the government daily proved repugnant to Czech readers.[14] The paper's efforts, therefore, failed to diminish the popularity of Havlicek's new paper.

After only five weeks of publication, *Slovan*, which often included witty and biting articles, was banned in Prague and two other urban centers. It was merely a question of time before this last press symbol of Czech opposition was to be silenced.

The imperial decree of July 6, 1851, initiated a system of warnings. A publication would cease operation after receiving three notices indicating displeasure with its content. After Havlicek was presented with two such warnings, he published the last issue of *Slovan* in August, 1851, thus denying the Austrian authorities the satisfaction of effecting the closure. In his farewell commentary, appropriately titled "The End!" he explained his decision: ". . . the course of independent, political, truly liberal and national journalism is now for a time at least closed in Austria. And where pure power rules, which according to whim and for everyday use makes its own laws, there the possibility for oppositional journalism ceases to exist."[15]

By silencing *Slovan*, the Austrian regime had successfully suppressed the Czech revolutionary press. As an added safeguard

against its reappearance, the decree of May 27, 1852, included provisions for licensing of the press and increased the required *kaution* introduced earlier. Toward the end of the year, only two Czech- and six German-language papers were being published in Prague, all obediently adhering to the administration's policies. In Moravia the main Czech newspaper, *Moravske noviny* (Moravian News), was also under government control.

Meanwhile, a concerted effort had been made by the administration in Vienna, headed by Minister of the Interior Alexander Bach,[16] to bring to trial political activists of the revolutionary movement, many of whom were journalists. This included such leading figures as Havlicek, exiled in 1851, and Arnold, Knedlhans, Vincenc Vavra and Karel Sabina, the latter four having been associated with radical democratic publications. They were sentenced to lengthy prison terms but released later under various amnesties. Havlicek, however, was not allowed to return from his Tyrolean exile until 1855, and then only to die.

Within three years after the upsurge of Czech political journalism, then, its major organs were silenced and its leading editors either had withdrawn voluntarily or been forcibly removed from journalistic activity. In 1857 the regime even reinstated the issuance tax—it had been in effect prior to March, 1848—which exacted a special duty for every issue of a paper or periodical printed. This raised prices of the few existing publications and discouraged large circulations.

Despite its brief duration, the journalism the revolutionary movement had engendered was truly idealistic and one which the people would not forget. The journalistic character and temperament of the time can best be summed up by the simple but direct words Havlicek used to describe the purpose and role of the press: "Newspapers . . . should have a timely interest; aside from [presenting] foreign news they should be primarily an organ and chronicler of all that is happening in our nation. They should assist the good and shame the bad and become a kind of conscience of the entire nation."[17]

The first attempts to develop a national press had failed in a short time, but the foundation which Havlicek and his contemporaries had laid served as a model for future generations of journalists.

As the force of reaction subsided and Bach's absolutism, whose mainstay had been military force and police terror, proved untenable and financially ruinous to the monarchy, public life in the Empire began to be rejuvenated. Old associations were revived and new ones organized, while virtually everything under public discussion was soon brought into a political context. Change seemed imminent and in the Czech lands an atmosphere of fresh hope and new ideas prevailed. By the end of the 1850s, only journalism failed to keep pace with the new upsurge; Prague had but one Czech-language daily, the administration's *Prazske noviny*, with a circulation of 2,000. The combined press run of the four leading German papers in the city was close to 14,000.[18] Understandably, the Czech leaders yearned for a national political daily.

Several attempts had been made to get permission to publish such a newspaper, but all had been denied by the authorities in Prague. An 1859 amendment to the existing press law eased some of the restrictions, however, encouraging Frantisek L. Rieger, Palacky's son-in-law and close associate, to make another try. His petition took the form of a memorandum addressed to Emperor Franz Josef. While its primary aim was permission to start a newspaper, Rieger's brief also expounded the political plight of his countrymen.

Rieger's request was denied, but his petition received wide publicity because it was printed abroad and clandestinely distributed among the Czechs. Realizing that a Czech press could not be stalled forever, the central administration finally granted concessions in 1860 for two Czech newspapers. There was good reason for this seeming generosity. By permitting two papers, the regime limited the potential influence of each, paving the way for press competition and political rivalry.

The first concession was granted to Alois Krasa, who turned to the nobility for support and financial assistance so that his daily, *Cas* (Time), first published in October, 1860, was subject to its influence and soon became the voice of the upper class. The second concession, indirectly a response to Rieger's earlier request, was obtained by Julius Gregr, a young academician and ardent nationalist. Considered inoffensive to the regime because of his

limited political involvement, Gregr had been chosen to seek the concession by a group of Czech leaders, including Palacky, Rieger and Gregr's brother Edvard. This group founded *Narodni listy* (National Pages), the first long-lived Czech daily, which initially appeared on New Year's Day, 1861, and lasted until 1941.

Cas at first attracted several writers from among the radical democrats because they believed that Krasa would use his publication to support Czech federalism against German centralism, the burning issue of the period. When this assumption proved false, they walked out and under Vavra's leadership began publishing their own daily, *Hlas* (The Voice), on January 2, 1862. Concurrently, permission was granted for the publication of the German-language daily *Die Zeit*.

After only three years of publication, however, *Hlas* merged with *Narodni listy* of which, in the meantime, Gregr had gained control. The union came about, oddly enough, because Vavra and Gregr had been confined in the same prison, the latter for his attacks against the Austrian Minister of State, the former for refusing to name one of his contributors. The two editors met frequently in the prison yard during exercise sessions and Vavra, the more radically inclined, was able to convince Gregr that Czech politics should become more progressive and aimed toward a wider segment of society.[19]

The official transaction occurred on January 1, 1865, but before the merger could take effect, *Narodni listy* was suspended for two months; so *Hlas* became its substitute organ during the intervening period. The merger represents one of the most significant events of Czech journalism during this formative period because members of the *Hlas* staff who joined *Narodni listy* became its future pride and helped shape the daily into a leading tribunal of Czech politics.[20] Furthermore, the paper's staff and frequent contributors included many major figures of Nineteenth-century Czech literature and arts. Poet Jan Neruda, composer Bedrich Smetana and writers Svatopluk Cech, Vitezslav Halek and Ignat Hermann were among the individuals involved. Their articles, commentaries, essays and *feuilletons* helped to establish journalism as a leading forum of culture and politics.

To understand journalism's role more clearly, one must be aware of the condition in which the Czechs emerged from the

destructive era of Bach's absolutism. The revolutionary movement of 1848 had solidified national consciousness, but it failed to realize its most important aim—the creation of an autonomous Czech and Slovak state within the Empire which would have afforded this newly realized nationalism full expression. Only Hungary, of which the Slovak lands were a part, managed to secure such a status with the creation of the Dual Monarchy (Austro-Hungarian Empire) in 1867. As a result, the Magyars continued to oppress the politically impotent Slovaks, shattering any hope of a union between the Czechs and Slovaks. Not until the first decade of this century, with the founding of the Slovak National Party which was strongly Catholic in character and led by a priest, did the Slovaks manage to become a significant political force.

Adding to the frustration was the absence of representation by the Czechs in the Vienna Parliament until 1879 when they abandoned the unproductive policy of boycotting the Reichsrat. Thus, until the 1880s the Czechs existed without any official political forum and lacked any semblance of a national life. The press, therefore, became their only tribunal and their culture (of which journalism was an integral part) the only real evidence of their existence as a nation.

From its difficult beginnings, marked by repeated suspensions, heavy fines and the frequent arrest of its editor, *Narodni listy* stood at the forefront of resistance to Austrian rule and German centralism. It was regarded as the main organ of a generally united national party which, while including representatives of varying political hues, was reinforced by the belief that only unity would strengthen its cause and benefit the nation's future course. Soon, however, two distinct political viewpoints predominated, and it was only a matter of time before the union split into opposing political camps—the Young Czechs (radical nationalists) and the Old Czechs (moderates), the latter being headed by Palacky and Rieger.

As Gregr's daily aligned itself more frequently with the opposition, the Old Czech Party needed a press of its own. In December, 1863, it began publishing *Narod* (The Nation), whose responsible editor[21] was Vilem Kienberger and later Frantisek Simacek. But the paper's strength was Palacky, who published in its pages some

of his most profound writings on the question of centralism, dualism and federalism. He still believed that the only proper course was for Austria to become a federalized state with its component nationalities having equal rights. His ideal was shattered, however, with the creation of the Dual Monarchy in 1867 in which only Hungary was afforded a degree of equality within the Empire. Meanwhile, Gregr's paper continued to express the platform of the Young Czechs. After independence it became the central organ of the group's successor, the National Democratic Party.

Concurrent with these internal political developments was a gradual change in the laws and practices regulating the press. The first major sign in this respect was the press law of December, 1862, which went into effect March 9 of the following year. Its most relevant proviso was the transfer of the press from political jurisdiction, namely the police administration, to that of the courts of law, thus providing the press with a greater degree of legal protection.[21] The new law also abolished some of the arbitrary preventive measures which previously had been employed against the press, including the system of warnings and concessions. Finally, it dissolved the censorship commission (*Bucherrevision*) attached to the main customs office in Prague.

But many restrictions still remained, enabling the authorities to maintain close control over the Czech press, especially papers and periodicals which expressed opposition views. In fact, the period between 1868 and 1870 has been described as one during which the Czech political press experienced some of its worst oppression. This included threats, confiscations of editions, fines, persecution of editors, disallowing of newsstands and suspension of publications.[23]

The Czech press, therefore, was politically oriented not only in internal politics but also in its oppositional activities against the regime. Through this struggle, it acquired new skills and learned to survive under a repressive rule. The regulatory system within which it functioned was maintained until the end of the Nineteenth century, although the press was gradually freed from some of the more restrictive measures. This can be seen, for instance, in the reestablishment in 1869 of press jury courts (abolished in 1849), nullification of the advertising tax in 1874, discontinuation

of the burdensome *kaution* in 1894 and, finally, removal of the issuance tax five years later.

Each improvement in conditions stimulated growth not only of the political press but of literary, economic and professional publications as well. But the rise of political journalism dominated public life as new political ideas and doctrines stimulated new movements which relied heavily on their publications to disseminate their respective causes and programs. During the 1880s, for example, the Social Democrats and their periodical publications gained a foothold in the Czech lands, while during the ensuing decade the press of the Agrarians began to flourish. Universal suffrage, introduced during 1907 in Austria, provided added impetus to the growth of political parties, intensifying both political awareness and political journalism.

It was during this period of growth that *Lidove noviny* (People's News) was founded by Adolf Stransky (1893). Published in Brno, Moravia, it rose within a 40-year span from a provincial paper to a leading national daily, becoming the acknowledged voice of the intelligentsia and one of the few politically independent Czech-language dailies.

At the beginning of the Twentieth century, 366 newspapers and periodicals which were classified as political were being published in the Czech lands. This included both Czech- and German-language publications regularly printed at least once a month. By 1910 the number had increased to 598, while the year prior to World War I saw 702 political newspapers and periodicals published out of a total of 1,946. This meant that more than one-third (36.1 percent) of all papers and periodicals published in the Czech lands just prior to the war were political in nature.[24] In terms of the daily press (papers published 5 to 7 times a week), the number increased from 37 in 1900 to 45 a decade later, and reached 59 by the end of 1913.[25]

On the eve of World War I, then, the Czechs were more politically sophisticated and better organized than ever before, and were bent on gaining recognition as equals within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Although the press tended to be political, the growing expansion in literacy prompted a noticeable increase in cultural material in the popular print media, as attested by the leading writers and

poets who contributed to prominent publications. This tradition, started during the pre-1848 period and carried over by such writers as Neruda and Cech, was continued by various literary figures, including J. S. Machar and Viktor Dyk, and later by Karel Capek and Eduard Bass. These writers not only enriched the nation's literary wealth but also aided in establishing and maintaining high standards in journalism.

The influence of literature on the nation's press may be seen in the diverse genres which men of letters have brought to it. Unlike newspapers in the United States, for instance, the Czech and Slovak popular press absorbed (and continues today to employ) many literary forms including the *feuilleton*, essay and sketch. Thus, during the formative years, the press saw its task as not only to inform but also to serve as an agent of politics, education, entertainment and literature.

As early as 1877, the task of maintaining professionalism in the field was accepted as a responsibility by the pioneering Organization of Czech Journalists. The impetus for its founding, however, was the recognized need for an official body to help journalists and their families in times of hardship.[26] During the first quarter of this century, several other journalist groups emerged, of which the most prominent was the Syndicate of Prague Journalists established in 1911. It became the Syndicate of Czechoslovak Journalists in 1926 and three years later had more than 600 members.[27] Other smaller professional journalism groups were united through their political or ethnic ties.

Nationhood and the Interwar Period

The crisis brought on by prospects of war in 1914 found the Czechs uncertain and divided in opinion as to their future. Some feared the loss of the basic unity gained through the struggle of preceding years, while others questioned the permanency of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Members of radical parties, meanwhile, began to appeal again to the historic rights of the old Bohemian Crown lands and, with the support of some National Socialists and Realists, proposed a separation from the Empire.[28] This public

sense of instability was heightened by the turmoil of general mobilization and the tensions of war.

Most of the activities which ultimately resulted in the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918, took place not inside the country but abroad (mainly in Britain, France and the United States) under the leadership of Tomas G. Masaryk and his protege, Edvard Benes. There existed inside the country, nevertheless, a desire for autonomy and self-determination (growing ever stronger as the war progressed) even if this sentiment manifested itself only in the form of social cooperation, internal discipline and moral fortitude in the face of Austro Hungarian oppression.

Such efforts usually are most effective when guided by cohesive leadership. At first the Czech popular press tended to be either pro-Austrian or noncommitted, primarily as a result of the imposition of severe restrictions including rigid censorship, a ban on political publications and intimidation of journalists and writers. During 1917, however, the previously silent or compliant Czech press took a stand and, utilizing purposeful yet noninflammatory language, spoke out in favor of nationhood, thus assuming a leadership role.[29] The press' example was followed by succeeding generations of writers during periods of national crisis.

Coinciding with this renewed activism was the publication of a writers' manifesto. Penned by poet-dramatist Jaroslav Kvapil and novelist Alois Jirasek, the May 1917 document openly repudiated a proclamation of loyalty to the Empire issued by leaders of nine Czech political parties. Although extracted under duress by Foreign Minister Count Ottokar Czernin, the proclamation nonetheless caused considerable embarrassment to Czech leaders negotiating with Allied Powers for recognition of an independent Czechoslovakia. However, the writers' manifesto, which called for a "democratic Europe, a Europe of autonomous and independent nations,"[30] soon became accepted as the true expression of the national will and helped solidify the internal struggle for an end to Austro-Hungarian domination.

Masaryk, who was to become Czechoslovakia's first president, attested to the effectiveness of the nation's press during this period when he wrote: "In our case leadership was supplied by the press, particularly those journals which, with tactical skill, with-

stood the military terrorism. By purposeful adroitness they revived sinking spirits, using language incomprehensible to the enemy though comprehensible to every Czech."[31] Later, Masaryk was to tell Capek: "Throughout my life I've been closely associated with *the literary organ of politics: the newspaper.* Even today [1926-27] I should probably have been a journalist if I hadn't another job"[32] (emphasis added). A professor of philosophy and sociology before turning to politics, Masaryk had acquired a sound journalistic background as political analyst, critic and editor.

Due to his prominent role in the national struggle, the writer-journalist, sometimes called "the heart and brain of the nation," became an influential force in the life of the young Republic. "The Czechs have never had many writers who wrote only to entertain. Politics and literature had gone hand in hand in their tradition, and their major figures kept on crossing the borderline between writing and politics."[33]

While press freedom, including the prohibition of prior restraint, was guaranteed in the new nation's constitution, the press law of 1923 provided for legal restrictions on the press during crises or in cases involving the advocacy of measures threatening the constitution, a republican form of government, public order or the office of the President.[34] If a court determined that a publication was repeatedly violating the law, for instance, it could be banned for one month in the case of a daily, and up to six months for other publications. When political extremism from both the left and right later threatened the nation's stability, the penalty was changed to include curtailment of distribution or the imposition of prior censorship.

The press law was part of a series of statutes aimed at preventing the reinstitution of the monarchy while safeguarding against social disorder and revolution. And although traditional immunities were granted members of Parliament, they did not extend to members who also were publishers or editors in cases involving libel or incitement to perform illegal acts.[35]

Czechoslovakia was not spared the problems faced by a newly independent nation. Perhaps the most obvious and, in the end, most consequential proved to be the minorities question, particularly the Czech-Slovak dichotomy. Rooted in the divergence of historical evolution, the conflict was evident on three levels: 1)

differences existing in regional economies, the Czech based on a blend between industry and agriculture, the Slovak almost solely on agriculture; 2) dissimilarity in cultural development, and 3) religious influence of varying intensity.

Fearful of being dominated by the Czech majority, the Slovaks demanded certain autonomous rights after independence, including local administration, education and courts of law. After the exuberance of nationhood had subsided, Slovak leaders made demands for greater Slovak autonomy until the German occupation in May, 1939, when Slovakia, under the Third Reich's tutelage, became an independent Republic.

The minorities problem was further exacerbated by the other national groups living within Czechoslovakia: Germans, Hungarians, Poles and Ruthenians. Moreover, the nation was recovering from a major war during its formative years and later from a depression while engaged in solving the problems of self-government. Amidst such birth pains, a new press developed which soon found itself torn between party allegiance and social responsibility.

The fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire brought not only independence to Czechoslovakia but also a reorientation in politics. The ethnically fragmented population led to a proliferation of political parties, which divided the dailies, and to a lesser extent the periodical press, along partisan lines. Thus independent and privately owned newspapers and journals continued to be the exception rather than the rule. Also, nationhood stimulated an increasing interest in both domestic and foreign political news. It was common practice to read one's own party or ethnic press, usually published in one of the major cities such as Prague, Bratislava or Brno. Yet despite its partisan character, the national press in large part avoided sensationalism and provided its readers with a wide variety of domestic and foreign news,[36] editorials and commentaries. Nor did the daily press neglect cultural, entertainment and sports articles or special features.

One of the leading dailies of the First Republic was the aforementioned *Lidove noviny*, which by the 1930s enjoyed a circulation of 100,000 in a nation with a total population of 13.5 million. Its chief assets were political independence (although it championed the left-of-center view) and the ability of its owners,

the Stransky family, to attract leading writers and specialists from various fields. Before 1939, articles and commentaries appeared under such names as Josef Capek and his brother Karel, both authors and playwrights, the latter probably the internationally best known Czech literary figure; Eduard Bass, novelist and satirist; Jaroslav Stransky, owner-editor, law professor and member of Parliament; Ferdinand Peroutka, prominent journalist; and Hubert Ripka, foreign affairs specialist and post-World War II Minister of Foreign Trade. The daily also followed closely the political and cultural life of Europe, particularly Great Britain, through its stringers and periodic sojourns abroad by its editors. Its pages included articles by English statesmen, such as Winston Churchill, and translations of English novels.[37]

Other important dailies of the interwar period were *Venkov* (Countryside), the Agrarian Party's chief organ founded in 1906; *Ceske slovo* (Czech Word), founded the following year as spokesman of the National Socialists; *Narodni politika* (National Politics), unattached conservative publication launched in 1883; and *Pravo lidu* (People's Right), started in 1893 and eventually the Social Democrats' official voice.

Of the post-1918 political dailies, the most notable were *Rude pravo* (Red Right), founded in 1920 and soon after the central organ of the Communist Party, and *Lidove listy* (People's Pages), started in 1922 as the voice of the Catholic Populist Party.

The press became very much a part of the daily life of the country. Its citizens had a propensity to glorify journalism because of the many prominent writers and statesmen associated with the field. As one American observer wrote: "The political creation of Professors Thomas G. Masaryk and Eduard Benes received the breath of national life through the instrumentality of propaganda, and now the nation is seeking to perpetuate itself through diligent encouragement of the press and printed word."[38]

The importance of the print media may also be seen in the government's interest in its development. In 1928, for instance, the nation's budget included an appropriation of 750,000 Kcs. (some $25,000 with a purchasing power of double that amount) for the establishment of a journalism school on the gymnasium level.[39] By 1939 nearly 4,000 newspapers and periodicals were published in Czechoslovakia, including 115 dailies, 423 weeklies

and 88 newspapers published every other day.[40] Prague, the nation's capital and publishing center, printed approximately one-third of the nation's newspapers and periodicals.

The importance of the political press may be understood in light of the large number of political parties that emerged after independence. During the 1920, 1925 and 1929 parliamentary elections no less than 49 parties and splinter groups campaigned for seats in the Senate and National Assembly. Although a majority of the parties appeared during the campaign never to be heard from again, others took their place.[41] By 1935, however, the practice of consolidating political strength left only 16 parties to campaign in the last free election prior to the war.

As a rule, 13 parties held seats in Parliament, and the cabinet was composed of individuals representing from four to seven of them. Generally, the government's political base remained unchanged during the First Republic with power resting in the coalition known as the *Petka* (quintet), made up of the Agrarian, National Democratic, National Socialist, Populist and Social Democratic parties.[42]

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, founded in 1921, was not outlawed, as was the case in other newly created East European states, but participated openly in the nation's political life and developed an active press. It gained some popular support and a respectable membership, which by 1927 had reached 138,000. But after becoming increasingly Bolshevized,[43] especially after 1929 with the ascendancy of a new radical leadership under Klement Gottwald, membership declined to 40,000 in 1931.[44] The growing threat of Hitler's Germany allowed the KSC to recoup some of its losses by joining with the nation's democrats in the United Front movement against fascism.

While the KSC enjoyed privileges guaranteed to all political parties, the government was not always tolerant of the extremist policies and programs the Party promoted during the early 1930s. The Communist press was frequently censored and the Party's representatives in Parliament, whose immunity was readily lifted, were jailed for brief periods of time.[45] Censorship and confiscation of Communist publications were implemented under the 1923 press law. This was also the case with the militant press of the Slovak and German extremist groups which came into promi-

nence during the critical depression years and intensified with Hitler's rise to power.

President Benes, succeeding Masaryk who had retired in 1935, attempted to keep the government and nation united during the mounting crisis. But the Fascist onslaught, both from within and without, plus pressures from other nationalistic groups and the Communists continued. As a protective measure, Parliament empowered the President to suppress, at his own discretion, newspapers and periodicals as well as political parties voicing extremist positions. That act sounded the death knell for press freedom in Czechoslovakia. Even pro-government publications which attacked Fascist policies and actions were censored lest their anti-German commentaries provoke unfavorable reaction among "peacemakers" abroad.[46] The tension continued until Austria fell into Hitler's hands.

This event was followed by the Munich Agreement of September 1938. From that time onward, for all intents and purposes, the First Republic ceased to exist. Benes and many other national leaders resigned and eventually went into exile, mostly to London and Moscow, and the nation was dismembered and parcelled out among Germany, Poland and Hungary. In March, 1939, Bohemia-Moravia became a protectorate of the Third Reich and the Czech press, what remained of it, was taken over by German occupation forces and controlled by the Propaganda Ministry.

The Communist Party Press

ALTHOUGH *Rude pravo* was first published on September 21, 1920, the daily did not become the leading organ of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party until some eight months later when the Party itself was officially organized. At first the paper served as the chief voice of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party's left wing, or so-called Marxist left, which subsequently adopted the 21 conditions of membership of the Communist International and proclaimed itself the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia[47] during the Party's Inaugural Congress in Prague May 14-16, 1921. Two days later, *Rude pravo* marked the occasion by including in its masthead for the first time the designation "Central organ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia."

Although this formal split between the two main factions of the Social Democratic Party (CSSD) occurred nearly four years after the Bolshevik Revolution, the Revolution nevertheless had an immediate impact on virtually all Social Democrats, particularly those who spent the war years in Russia, most of them as prisoners of war. As early as 1917 they organized their own party under the leadership of Alois Muna. The following May it was named the Czechoslovak Communist Party in Russia and its committees became secondary organs of the Russian Communist Party. Financed by the Soviet leadership in Moscow,[48] the Czechoslovak group published several newspapers, including the central organ *Prukopnik svobody* (Pioneer of Freedom) and its successor *Pravda* (Truth), and was generally active in supporting the Bolshevik cause.

This activity abroad led directly to the reorientation of the CSSD following the war. Two movements soon emerged within its ranks: the moderate wing, which remained loyal to the ideals and

basic politics of the Social Democrats, and the Marxist left, which adopted more radical tactics and adhered to the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As was the case with most European Social Democratic parties during the immediate postwar period, it was the left faction which ultimately split from the main body to join the international Communist movement.

The central organ of the CSSD since 1897 was *Pravo lidu*. When political and ideological differences between the Social Democrats' main opposing factions were crystallizing during the 1920s, the Marxist left succeeded in gaining a majority on the paper's staff. Led by Bohumir Smeral, Vaclav Vacek and Ivan Olbracht, this majority made the paper a voice of the Marxist left.

Meanwhile, events surrounding the CSSD's Thirteenth Congress (scheduled for September 25-28, 1920) brought the mounting crisis to a climax. The election of delegates by local CSSD branches made it clear that the leftist view would prevail, which meant, in effect, the Congress would approve joining the Communist International. To forestall such action, the Executive Committee (in which moderates held a majority) decided to postpone the Congress and, moreover, declared that expressed loyalty to Comintern was discordant with membership in the Social Democratic Party. Although committee members realized that such measures meant splitting and thus weakening the CSSD, the moderate leaders believed it to be the only way to maintain control and, at the same time, keep the CSSD's social democratic character.[49]

The Executive Committee's action was followed the next day by a spontaneous meeting of Prague workers' representatives who expressed their opposition by organizing their own action committee and seizing the Social Democratic Party's administrative headquarters. The People's Center, as it was called, housed both the editorial offices of *Pravo lidu* and the CSSD's printing plant. Along with this move, the Center's personnel formed their own council (consisting primarily of the daily's staff members) and placed the paper's editor-in-chief, Josef Stivin, a moderate, under direct supervision.

The imposition of what amounted to censorship prompted Stivin and publisher designate Antonin Nemec to vacate their offices and transfer their operation to the publishing house of

Eduard Beaufort. Joined by other members of the moderate faction, they published their first issue of *Pravo lidu* in the new facilities on September 19, 1920. Smeral and his staff, meanwhile, continued to publish their version of the paper which on September 18 and 19 appeared under the name *Stare Pravo lidu* (The Old People's Right).

The turmoil over the use of the paper's name was resolved, at the insistance of the moderates, in a district court which ruled against the Marxist left, forcing it to find a new name for its publication.[50] The Marxist staff chose the name *Rude pravo*. Shortly thereafter, a court order also forced its staff to vacate the People's Center which was returned to the CSSD's Executive Committee. Thus began the history of Czechoslovakia's Communist press of which the newly named daily became the chief voice and prototype.

From such vexatious beginnings, the Communist press faced an uphill struggle to compete with the rest of the nation's press for readers and to gain followers for programs proposed by the KSC. Its most damaging liabilities were its general drabness, both in appearance and content, the Comintern's growing influence on its style and a continual lack of funds.[51] A Czech historian has observed that lest their newspapers resemble the bourgeois press too closely, Communist editors displayed a certain degree of conservatism in makeup and a writing style described by one Agitprop functionary as "the thesis style."[52]

Nevertheless the KSC did attract a mass following initially,[53] including many writers and literary figures who worked as staff members on, or were frequent contributors to, its newspapers and periodicals. Many intellectuals were attracted to the Party by its professed internationalism and radical socialism and favored the cultural relations developed over the years between Russia and Czechoslovakia,[54] strengthened by their common experience of being recently freed from monarchical forms of rule. These leftist intellectuals believed that communism represented a large enough ideological mantle to include differing viewpoints.

Under Comintern influence, however, the KSC was soon Bolshevized, thus adopting a new and narrow direction. The process was accentuated during 1929 by the rise to power of "the boys from Karlin," as the CSSD press called them, a group of young func-

tionaries, intellectuals and workers headed by Gottwald. During the Party's Fifth Congress, convened February 18-23 of the same year, Gottwald was elected the Party's General Secretary and from then until his death in 1953 remained its undisputed leader.

The Fifth Congress, according to official Party history, constituted a watershed in the KSC's political orientation. The main program adopted during the stormy meeting followed closely the general ideological line of the world Communist movement as articulated by the Soviet Union. This set in motion a period of ardent Bolshevization which gave the Party its activist and revolutionary character as the vanguard of the working class. The Moscow-oriented course thus established was to guide the Party's policies from then on.

The Congress also proclaimed Czechoslovakia an imperialist state, thus launching the Party press on a propaganda campaign against the nation's democratic institutions and system of government. This was a key reason why the Communist press was frequently censored during the First Republic and individual papers were suspended for as long as six months at a time, forcing the KSC to publish them illegally. During such intervals, illegal issues of *Rude pravo*, for example, were printed in Vienna and then smuggled into the country via Brno and other points.[55] Throughout the course of the interwar period and ensuing years, then, the Communist Party regarded its press as a vital instrument in its propaganda against the nation's government and in criticizing the programs of major bourgeois parties.

Structure and Organization

At the time of its founding, the KSC had a well established press system, publishing 34 newspapers and periodicals in the Czech lands alone (all former CSSD publications supporting the Marxist left viewpoint). Seven were dailies, three in Czech and four in German: *Rude pravo*, *Rovnost* (Equality), *Delnicky denik* (Worker's Daily), *Vorwarts*, *Der Kampfer*, *Internationale* and *Volksstimme*. The number of papers and periodicals increased until 1924 when 62 periodic publications were included on the

Party's press roster. After that year the number fluctuated but declined steadily until October, 1938, when the Communist press was outlawed in Czechoslovakia as a direct result of the Munich Agreement.[56]

The greatest difficulties were encountered by the Party's Slovak press section. In addition to the restrictive political climate in Slovakia, limited technical facilities and lack of financial assets soon forced the Slovak-language Party press to be published in the Czech cities of Moravska-Ostrava and Prague. Besides, most of the staff members on the CSSD's major newspaper in Slovakia, *Robotnicke noviny* (Workers' News), supported the moderate faction, which forced the Marxists to launch their own paper, the weekly *Pravda chudoby* (Truth of Poverty), on September 15, 1920, in Ruzomberk.[57] The paper became a daily five years later after its name had been shortened to its present-day title, *Pravda*, and its operation moved to Ostrava.

Four years later *Pravda* again became a weekly, primarily for technical and financial reasons, but it remained the chief Slovak-language voice of the KSC, thus the central organ of the Slovak section, until its demise in 1935. During 1924-25, it added Sunday and Thursday supplements called *Proletarska nedel'a* (Proletarian Sunday) and *Kosak* (Sickle). Other periodic publications issued under the auspices of the KSC press committee in Slovakia included *Hlas l'udu* (People's Voice), *Spartakus*, *Proletarka* (Proletarian Woman) and the Hungarian-language *Kassai Munkas* (Kosice Worker). Of these, only the last named remained active during the 1930s. When suspended in 1936, the paper was replaced by *Magyar Nap* (Hungarian Day).

It also was the Slovak Communist press section which launched Gottwald on his career as a publicist and Party *apparatchik*. Between 1921 and 1923, Gottwald was active on several Slovak publications, including *Pravda chudoby*, to which he contributed articles on the mission of the Party press. Early in 1923 he was elected to the KSC's press committee in Slovakia and became a member of the Zilina district's Executive Committee. The following year, Gottwald was named responsible editor of *Pravda chudoby* and, as such, held the same post for all Slovak-language Communist publications until 1926, when he was transferred to Prague to head the Party's Agitprop Department as a member of

the Central Committee and its Politburo to which he had been elected the previous year.[58]

During the 1920s the primary task of the Communist press, as the Party's main organizational instrument, was "to prepare the masses, especially the vanguard of the proletariat, for the future decisive battles for power."[59] To this end the leadership conducted press propaganda campaigns on both the political and economic fronts. But the Party's periodic publications at this time did not constitute a popular press in the sense of attracting a wide readership.

In 1924, for instance, the KSC reported its membership as 138,996 of which 89,498, or less than 65 percent of its members, said they subscribed to the Party press. In the Prague district alone, the nation's publishing center, the situation was even gloomier. Only 8,542 or some 53 percent of 16,096 KSC members subscribed to *Rude pravo*.[60] Other districts reported still less impressive subscription figures. Three years later, the situation had grown even worse. Only 26.7 percent of the membership, which then totaled 138,000, subscribed to at least one Communist daily, while 18 percent did not subscribe to any Party publication.[61] This shortcoming made the press subject to frequent criticism by both Party and Comintern leaders.

Although publications such as *Pravda* and *Rude pravo* were designated as "mass newspapers," in this instance one must interpret mass to mean "not the number of issues printed but the fact that they were directed toward the masses and produced in accordance with their active participation."[62] During the interwar period, Communist dailies as a rule had circulations well below the 100,000 mark, the evening and Sunday editions being the most widely read.

From its very beginning, the press was directed toward centralization and consolidation stemming from the need to create a more effective mass medium and, at the same time, to lessen the financial burden on the Party. The crystallizing of Party programs and objectives, evident on the pages of Party publications, also reflected the continual infighting taking place among the various factions, a struggle in which Gottwald's radical-revolutionary wing emerged as a powerful force during discussions preceding the Party's Fifth Congress, and was totally victorious at its conclusion.

The crisis within the Party brought on by the change in leadership prompted a major reorganization of the Communist press. The new leaders increased their demands for consistency and uniformity in press content to strengthen its propaganda mission. The trend toward conformity was caused in large part by Comintern pressure to which all of its sections were being progressively subjected in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The influence of the Comintern on the sectional press was considerable during this period, since "[t]he basic directive for the work of the Communist press was the line adopted by Comintern."[63]

A concrete example of this influence is provided in the unpublished first volume of memoirs by Stanislav Budin who, between August, 1934, and December, 1935, held the post of editor-in-chief of *Rude pravo*. When he wrote, for instance, that military conflict between Germany and Czechoslovakia would not constitute an imperialist war,[64] but one justified on the basis of defense of the nation, and that Communists therefore should support the building of a strong military force inside their country, Budin was rebuked by a Politburo member who told him that "such a discussion cannot come from the KSC; it must come from Moscow, from Comintern."[65]

To centralize the press, the KSC leadership decided as early as 1921 to follow the commonly used system of satellite papers whereby the main pages of *Rude pravo* would serve as the basis for other newspapers. Initially, the practice was employed only in rural regions. But as financial and political difficulties mounted, the system was also applied to previously separate Communist dailies in major cities. This meant that, although mastheads were changed to provide a semblance of continuity, all but one of the pages were identical in content. The one open or "mutation" page was reserved for local news and Party information.

Thus after 1935 the KSC in essence published only three main dailies: *Rude pravo*, *Die rote Fahne* and *Magyar Nap*.[66] The Party's evening daily, not an official Party publication, was *Halo-noviny* (Hello-News) which replaced *Rudy vecernik* (Red Nightly) when the latter was discontinued in 1934 due to financial difficulties. The lively and informative *Halo-noviny* continued publica-

tion until 1938 and at times found itself at odds with the official Party press.

The permanent staff of *Rude pravo* (as well as other Communist dailies) was small, ranging from eight to twelve members. In Budin's time, for instance, the editorial department consisted of eight writers and two or three typists. The major departments were youth and culture, social affairs, domestic politics, foreign affairs and sports, although these areas and the division of labor among them were never constant. "In this editorial office, because [the staff] was small, everyone wrote what he considered important," Budin noted. "There were no jealousies or bad feelings amongst its members."[67] The paper's main sections also varied according to the Party's immediate needs and often reflected themes stressed by Comintern departments.

As chief editor, Budin had daily (usually informal) meetings with one of several Party leaders who provided the general political direction of the paper. The staff in turn held morning editorial meetings to decide what type of article(s) each member would write for the next day's edition. *Rude pravo* was published daily except Monday and, as was the case with most central organs of Comintern's sections, provided ample space for Comintern directives and reports as well as for Russian writers and other prominent foreign Communists. Such materials, depending upon their importance, were received in the editorial offices via telephone, telegraph, special dispatches or Comintern publications such as the *International Press Correspondence*.

For financial as well as ideological reasons, the main Communist dailies subscribed to only a portion of the services provided by the Czechoslovak News Agency (CTK) so that their major sources for foreign news were *Pravda* (Moscow), the French Communist daily *L'Humanite* and occasional dispatches filed by Communist journalists abroad. As expected, foreign coverage concentrated on the Soviet Union. Despite continued efforts, the Party was never totally successful in consolidating and centralizing its press. This was especially true after the Fifth Congress whose newly formulated radical program had detrimental effects on the Party's popularity that continued to plague it throughout the 1930s. This was most evident in the relationship between the KSC and leftist intellectuals, especially writers and journalists.

One of the central factors contributing to the many problems encountered by the KSC during this period was its increasing bureaucratism and dogmatism stemming from an intensified Bolshevizing of the Party. This led directly to the KSC's losing of popularity among the masses. The extensive influence of the Communist International on KSC affairs also affected the Party press, which was gradually fashioned into a spokesman for the Comintern, that is, Soviet foreign policy. This change in orientation was not readily accepted by many leftist intellectuals who tended to resist the restrictions and various political guidelines being imposed upon them. As a result, an exodus of KSC members occurred, some willingly, some by force. Those who failed to comply with Party directives were purged.

The split between the Party and members of the intelligentsia is exemplified by the literary figures and journalists referred to as "the group of seven writers." A month after the Fifth Congress, they published a manifesto in the non-Communist press opposing the new program and orientation pursued by the newly elected leadership. The writers' defiant action caused their immediate expulsion from the KSC without so much as a hearing.[68] To understand the conflict between the Party and its press, a situation which has continued intermittently to the present day, it is helpful to explore the character of the press before and after the Fifth Congress.

Initially, the Communist press, in line with its Social Democratic origins, was written and edited in the style of a house organ in which policies were generally thrashed out in open polemics. This gave rise to situations where *Rudé pravo*, for example, published articles which did not parallel the views expressed by the KSC's leading bodies. A case in point is the 1922-24 period when Filip Dobrovolný and Olbracht, both advocates of a faction whose leading spokesmen had been deprived of important Party functions (though not of KSC membership) for disciplinary reasons, continued to be a major force on *Rudé pravo's* staff and to express their views.[69]

The opportunity for a certain degree of "independent" action by Communist journalists was further indicated by Vojtech

Dolejsi, longtime Party publicist and functionary, who wrote that although the first condition for Comintern membership stipulated that all Party publications and publishing houses be subordinate to the Central Committee, this was not interpreted to mean that the Committee would directly control the press. "The editorial staff, for which reliable comrades were selected, was well aware of the general line of the Party and its stance on cogent political questions, *but the interpretation of this line the staff took upon itself as it understood it and as best as it knew how*"[70] (emphasis added). However, it was the very issue of enunciating and interpreting major policies over which editorial offices and individual editors ran into conflict with Party and Comintern leaders. This was most evident in the critical articles appearing in Comintern publications such as the *Communist International*.[71] Due to this independent attitude and the resultant criticism issued by Moscow, the KSC leadership under Gottwald increased its vigilance over the Party press.

Between September, 1921, and November, 1928, for example, the top editorial post of *Rude pravo* was changed only three times, while during the following ten-year period the position changed hands no less than twelve times among nine individuals. And while one or two of these staff changes were necessitated by editors having to go into hiding to avoid arrest, at least two chief editors, Josef Guttman and Budin, were expelled from the Party for alleged deviations and sabotage. The latter's case is especially interesting because Budin's journalistic career represents a good example of the link in tradition existing between the interwar period and the reform movement of the 1960s.[72] He was active during both periods, directly involved in the struggle against the Party leadership's arbitrariness, inconsistency and dogmatism.

The tendency toward stricter control and insistence on obedience without question alienated many leftist intellectuals whose support for the Party had limits when it came to sectarian policies and dictatorial practices. This was expressed clearly in the manifesto of "the group of seven writers." They maintained that as active writers and journalists they could no longer remain silent about the Party's "suicidal and incompetent politics." The group accused the new leaders of creating "guinea pigs of paper revolutionariness" out of the working people and of leading the Party into a

blind alley. "Take the initiative, demand a redress," the manifesto urged KSC members, "let Communists come into the Party leadership who desire unity and a mass Party, and the removal of fractional terrorism. Guide the Party so that the working masses will regain their faith in themselves and in the leadership which they themselves have elected."[73]

Another factor playing a prominent part in the conflict was the question of the Party's influence in the realm of socialist culture which, after 1929, became more and more a part of KSC politics. This was closely linked to the concept of socialist realism being espoused through Comintern channels and it increasingly confronted individual Communist writers with the restrictive nature of Party policies.

The journalistic activities of staff members on major Communist publications were not limited to newspapers but frequently extended to the field of cultural politics in which there still existed at the time "a certain 'relative' degree of freedom of opinion."[74] While the Party's central organ and its evening edition included articles and commentaries on the socialist culture theme, it was primarily *Tvorba* (Creation), the KSC's official journal for politics and culture, and organs of the intellectually oriented Left Front movement[75] which proved to be the main forum for the exchange of ideas along this theme. The literary forms and content included were not always consistent with official Party dicta and quite often in opposition to them. The Fifth Congress resolution stated that "Communists and Party organizations must maintain discipline even when the Party's leadership commits mistakes."[76] Failure to adhere to this principle meant almost certain expulsion.

Despite its increased vigilance during the 1930s, the KSC leadership had difficulty maintaining control and discipline within its press.

During the December 1935 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which followed Comintern's Seventh World Congress, problems within the KSC were discussed and performance of its press evaluated. Among those reporting at the meeting was Party functionary Rudolf Slansky who, according to Budin, stated that the Party's most serious mistakes occurred in its press, especially *Rude pravo* and *Halonoviny*, both of which were staffed by intellectuals who were

turning away from the Party.[77] Three months later, in an article in *Communist International*, Vaclav Kopecky, former chief editor of *Rude pravo* and KSC Politburo member, issued a diatribe against the paper in general and Budin in particular. The opening sentences provide an example of the content and tone of the article:

> In consequence of the loss of revolutionary, Bolshevik vigilance, enemies of the Party wormed their way into the *Rude pravo*, . . . and tried, and to some extent were very successful, in making [*sic*] use of the central organ for the propaganda of alien ideas, hostile to Bolshevism, and contrary to the line of the Comintern and of its Seventh World Congress. Further, there were political errors in the *Rude pravo*, . . . which led, finally, to the exposure of Budin, the chief editor of the paper, and to his being driven out of the Party.[78]

Following the mutual defense pact between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, concluded in May, 1935, the KSC changed its stance on the issue of the defense of Czechoslovakia which, subsumed in the campaign to defend Soviet Russia, was suddenly proclaimed a just cause. This became a primary campaign of the Communist press during the remaining years of the First Republic when the Party also began to cooperate with Czechoslovakia's government on the issue of defense, despite Gottwald's disapproval and insistance that the class struggle must continue.

With the threat of fascism increasing in Europe, however, Communist press propaganda in Czechoslovakia tended to neglect the class struggle and concentrate instead on the prospects of war with Germany. This undertaking was marked by frequent references to the nation's historic rights and the use of nationalistic symbols and themes (anathema to the Communist concept of internationalism) until, in the end, the KSC became one of the most vocal defenders of the nation. And, despite the brief dilemma that the Soviet-German friendship pact presented to the Party, the KSC nonetheless regained some of its former mass support for an anti-Fascist stance which, in later years, the Party utilized to full advantage in its propaganda campaigns.

Occupation and the Underground Press

The disintegration of the First Republic following the Munich Agreement of September 1938 also meant the end of the KSC's

existence as a legal party in Czechoslovakia. For, following the flight into exile of President Benes and other top government leaders, but before the actual German invasion of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939, a strong authoritarian trend took hold inside the nation. Prior censorship had been introduced as early as September, 1938, but the frequency of white spaces in newspapers proved embarrassing to the new administration. The Ministerial Council's decree of December 6, 1938, therefore, initiated a more stringent supervision of the press by placing in each major newspaper concern a censor who checked all copy.[79] Previously, first editions had to be submitted to the censor's office before circulation or mailing, leaving too little time to substitute acceptable for objectionable items.

Meanwhile, the KSC had activated its underground network and commenced its illegal activities. Throughout the war years, in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia at least, such endeavors focused on propaganda and the maintenance of an operative organizational network. Thus, during the occupation, "Party leadership was assumed at various times by four different central committees whose primary responsibilities were to assure the publication of *Rude pravo* and to renew the organizational network torn by the most recent set of arrests."[80]

The KSC was better prepared for its underground work than any other major political group inside the country because: 1) With its previous experience with punitive measures, especially between 1930 and 1934, Party organizations were accustomed to publishing and distributing underground newspapers, leaflets and pamphlets; and in anticipation of being forcibly suppressed, the leadership had made provisions for continuing this work, including setting up underground printing facilities and distribution networks. 2) During Russo-German pact years, the Party was relatively free of persecution by German authorities, which enabled the KSC to fortify its structure of party units, cells and instructors.[81] Between the occupation of Czech lands in March, 1939, and the German invasion of Soviet territory on June 22, 1941, no fewer than 66 illegal periodicals were issued by KSC cells inside the Protectorate. Following the break in Russo-German relations and until Czechoslovakia's liberation in May, 1945, the number was reduced by almost half, to 38 titles.[82] Of course such publications

appeared irregularly, and many were published for only a brief time during the war years. Actually, this display of organizational proficiency during the war became a source of criticism of the KSC after liberation by some of its opponents, who maintained that the Party had been too preoccupied with political, organizational and propaganda work to undertake any significant resistance against the occupiers.[83]

Underground activities during the war were carried out by two main groups—the Communists and the Nation's Defense, a conglomerate of various nationalistic and anti-Fascist groups. The shock of occupation caused even some conservative politicians, members of the Agrarian Party, for instance, to engage in opposition work. Such was the case, for example, in the Council of Ministers' top administrative department for press affairs. As early as June of 1939, the Gestapo uncovered within the national news service a clandestine information center whose task it was to collect political and military information and forward it to centers such as London and Warsaw.[84]

Throughout the war years, the KSC managed to print several illegal publications, as well as numerous leaflets and fliers, but the main emphasis was given to maintaining its central organ, the first illegal issue of which appeared in August, 1939. The journalistic work was implemented by members of the KSC's illegal Central Committee and their closest co-workers. Initially, issues of *Rude pravo* were produced on duplicating machines, but the paper was soon clandestinely printed in various shops and then, from 1942 until the end of the war, again duplicated.[85] At the onset of the occupation the paper usually appeared as a biweekly, but as the internal situation became more restrictive and materials grew scarce, it was issued at greater intervals. The now defunct Historical Institute of the KSC managed to secure only 65 numbers of the illegally printed *Rude pravo* for its archives, giving some indication how infrequently it was issued.[86]

Conditions for underground work proved to be more favorable in Slovakia which in 1939 became a separate state under a German-installed puppet government. Internal control was less effective than that of the Germans in the Protectorate, the terrain was more conducive to partisan activity and the proximity of the Soviet border afforded easier contact between Moscow and Slovak

Communists. Also, the Communist Party in Slovakia (KSS) became a separate section of the Comintern, although it continued to be guided by the KSC leadership. The link between Slovak Communists and the KSC leaders in Moscow proved to be a weak one, however, so that underground activities inside the puppet state were actually directed by local leaders, such as Gustav Husak and Laco Novomesky, who focused their efforts on liberating Slovakia rather than strengthening their own separate Communist organization.[87]

The Slovak Communists, for instance, joined as equal partners with democratic forces in forming the Slovak National Council which, with the aid of some disgruntled Slovak Army officers, staged the unsuccessful uprising against the Germans during August of 1944. (For their failure to emphasize the class struggle in their illegal work, many Slovak Communists, including Husak and Novomesky, were later criticized as "bourgeois nationalists," resulting in their imprisonment, and liquidation in some cases, during the early 1950s.) The main illegal publications of the KSS included *Hlas l'udu* (People's Voice), *Kladivo* (Hammer), *Hlas dediny* (Hamlet Voice) and *Bol'sevicka zastava* (Bolshevik Pledge), the latter being a journal devoted to ideological issues.

Of the non-Communist wartime publications in the Protectorate, the most prominent was *V boj* (Into Battle), which was edited by Josef Skalda until his execution by the Germans in June 1942. After Skalda's death, Vojtech Preissing led the small group devoted to publishing this underground newspaper.[88] Other non-Communist publications included *Cesky kuryr* (Czech Courier), published by R. Korcak's group, *Kpt. Nemo* (Capt. Nemo) and *Retez* (Chain). Most of the non-Communist papers and pamphlets were published irregularly and their names were changed frequently to confuse the occupiers.

Despite their differences in tactics and ultimate goals, the ranks of both non-Communist and Communist journalists sustained substantial losses during the war years. In 1947 the Union of Czech Journalists compiled a list of newsmen who had either perished in concentration camps or been executed by occupation forces. The list contained 112 names of which 37 were KSC members. Another roster of 126 names represented media personnel who had either been imprisoned or deported to concentration camps but

had survived.[89] While severe measures were taken by the Germans against the underground press, they were never quite successful in silencing it. The illegal press, both Communist and non-Communist, attempted as best it could under the difficult circumstances to provide the people with information about events both at home and abroad, and to dispel the false rumors which were continually circulating, initiated at times by the German propaganda machine to confuse the public. As one wartime periodical stated:

> Among the things which the Germans have robbed us of is also the means of understanding and information, particularly the press and radio. They have armed them against us, because the Czech-written press and the Czech-speaking radio are in German hands and are German aids translated into Czech. . . . We shall replace them by other means: by whispering news and a whispering press. . . .[90]

And while the total resistance effort inside Czechoslovakia was never quite as intense or extensive as it was in Poland or some of the other occupied nations of Europe, the underground press did nevertheless try to keep the spirit of resistance and hope for the future alive. It did so by urging slow-down tactics and outright sabotage in German-held factories, encouraging the boycotting of the German-controlled Czech-language press and informing its readers about the efforts being made abroad in the cause of freedom. The illegal Communist press, meanwhile, also began "to lay the foundations for [a] new . . . people's democracy . . . in the country following liberation."[91]

Postwar Reorganization

Prague was liberated on May 9, 1945, by units of the Red Army. This signaled the beginning of a new epoch for the Czechoslovak state, one characterized by a struggle for power by the Communist Party, which had emerged from the occupation holding a strong political and psychological position within the country.[92] Virtually all aspects of national life were affected during the postwar period of reconstruction, the press being no exception. For the Communists held the belief that the press "influences social conscience [and] helps coordinate the speed

with which the revolutionary process takes place."[93] The KSC, therefore, concentrated immediately on strengthening the position of its own press and weakening the influence of the non-Communist press by attempting to gain control of the media. Most crucial in this respect was the reorganization of the nation's press system, a task which fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Information, headed at the time by Party functionary Kopecky.

The reorganization of the press was based on the principle, enunciated by the Communist-dominated Czech National Council created during the closing days of the war, that "newspapers and periodicals are the property of the nation and cannot be the object of gainful enterprise by individuals or anonymous groups."[94] This principle was later endorsed by the government since it did not seem to represent a radical departure from prewar traditions where individual or family ownership was the exception. Nevertheless, the provision proved to be a significant lever of control for the Ministry, whose supervision over the press included what amounted to licensing power.

This meant, in effect, that only legally recognized political parties and national organizations which were part of the National Front were allowed to publish newspapers and periodicals. Private capital was barred from print media ownership. (Some exceptions to the rule did occur in terms of specialized journals.) Thus, aside from following Marxist economic theory, the basic principle guiding press reorganization also proved most convenient for the KSC in placing the press under direct government control and, more important, subjecting the non-Communist press to the supervision of the Communist-held Ministry of Information.

The socialization of journalism was foreshadowed, surprisingly enough, by President Benes. Shortly after returning from exile, he expressed his views on the changing nature of the press during a meeting of Czech journalists:

> In my opinion, journalism is a public service. Unbridled freedom to publish newspapers must not be re-established. We all know what the yellow press meant before the War. This, to be sure, is a restriction of personal liberty, but we have to ask ourselves to what extent it is necessary, and in whose interest. Unrestricted freedom has to yield to public interest. This is why with us newspapers are published by public corporations, to whom the right has to be reserved in a certain way, lest something indefinite, mysterious and secret

should conceal itself behind the facade of newspapers. We have to accept this principle. We all say that Liberalism has been discarded. This is a fact, and we must realize that one of the factors in public life that is above all subject to today's socializing trends, is journalism. How to harmonize this fact with freedom of speech is another matter. But here, too, the principle that the freedom of the individual has to be subordinated to the freedom of the whole, holds good.[95]

Benes had been highly disturbed by the performance of a small portion of the interwar press. A few extremist publications had exploited sensationalism and practiced yellow journalism. Most of the prewar newspapers, as one American scholar observed, "had not put public interest in the background; . . . the great majority were sober, serious papers serving the nation well."[96]

A government decree of July 16, 1946, instructed the information ministry to draft a new press law. Actually, work on a press law to fill the gap until a new constitution could be drafted, was begun as early as the spring of 1945. The initial proposal came in the form of a decree written by Kopecky and presented to the President's office that September; but Benes refused to sign the document on grounds that it should be decided upon by the National Assembly.[97] A revised version of the plan was submitted to the Assembly in the spring of 1946, where it met with considerable opposition. The document was composed of several parts covering both periodic and nonperiodic publications, the status of editors and the regulation of the Union of Journalists.

Meanwhile the Ministry was granted certain regulatory powers. It thus banned the press of outlawed political parties, altered names of papers issued during the occupation, granted publishing permits, directed the national wire service and supervised the nation's broadcasting network. As a result, several major prewar newspapers were discontinued after liberation, including three conservative dailies of long standing—*Venkov*, *Narodni listy* and *Narodni politika*. The justification given for the papers' demise was that by serving the occupiers they had discredited themselves in the eyes of the nation.[98]

An example of the name-changing practice (a tactic usually causing the affected publication to lose vital public identity) was the intellectuals' voice *Lidove noviny* which, following liberation, became *Svobodne noviny* (Free News), official organ of the Association of Cultural Organizations. Under the editorship of Per-

outka, it proved to be one of the most influential dailies during the postwar period. After the Communist takeover it became the official organ of the Union of Writers.

Communist front organizations appropriated printing establishments operated by the Germans or their so-called collaborators. Facilities of *Narodni politika*, for example, became the property of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, publisher of the daily *Prace* (Labor). The former offices and printing plant of the highly regarded prewar paper *Prager Tagblatt*, which the Nazis had turned into the propaganda sheet *Der neue Tag*, were appropriated by the Czechoslovak Union of Youth, publisher of the daily *Mlada fronta* (Young Front).[99]

Following the initial readjustment in the nation's press structure, however, the greatest potential for control was made possible by the shortage of newsprint, which the Ministry's Bureau of Publications was responsible for allocating to existing newspaper concerns and printing plants. "During the period between May 1945 and February 1948, the most effective instrument of control in the development of our press was the rationing of newsprint by the then Ministry of Information, at the head of which was a Communist," a journalist later explained. "Thanks to this reality, the then broad development of the press did, after all, have its limits."[100] The Bureau also was empowered to regulate the number, size and location of periodic publications, as well as the press runs of each paper, journal and magazine. Thus, only 10 national dailies were allowed to be published in Prague, with an additional 18 daily and 87 weekly political newspapers being issued in 5 other major cities, outlying districts and rural regions of the Czech lands.[101]

The Ministry also operated its own internal information service, a network of 19 information centers throughout the country. Each was headed by a director and the entire system staffed by 47 permanent employees plus more than 100 "confidants."[102] Information gathered by the service was channeled to Prague, where it was released. This network provided the Ministry with a fairly detailed survey of the entire country, enabling Kopecky and his colleagues to keep appropriate KSC organizations abreast of developments, thus aiding them in their propaganda work and agitation activities.

In Slovakia the situation of the press proved to be less restrictive, primarily because the Commissioner of Publications was not a Communist but member of the Slovak Democratic Party. This allowed for greater freedom and flexibility in publishing (which Communists called "unrestrained and anarchic"[103]) as indicated by the size of newspapers, some as many as 20 pages. In the Czech lands the limit was set at 4 pages. The 187 periodic publications issued in Slovakia before February of 1948 had a total press run of less than 500,000 copies.[104] In comparison, the 10 Prague dailies alone had a combined press run of more than 1,800,000. Six papers following Marxist ideology had a combined circulation of 1,220,000; four non-Marxist dailies circulated 593,000 copies.[105]

Opposition to Kopecky's proposed press law and his revised draft for the reorganization of the nation's press manifested itself in an unusually sharp debate in the National Assembly. The discussion of freedom of expression, the concept of liberalism and the print media's role in society reached such an impasse that even President Benes refused to participate in any further consultations on the matter. He disagreed with Kopecky on the basic question of press freedom as defined in the proposed draft.[106] In retrospect, it seems evident that while Benes favored certain limitations on the press, such as barring private ownership of major newspapers, he did not condone licensing as proposed by Kopecky.[107]

Realizing that the National Assembly would not approve his recommendations as a package, Kopecky introduced them in piecemeal fashion so that during fall 1946 the Assembly received the Minister's draft of a law defining the status of editors and the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists (SCSN).

The Assembly approved the new law in May, 1947, but a more comprehensive press law for the country was not adopted until some months after the Communists gained complete political power in 1948. The 1947 law defined the status of editors as follows:

> An editor is an employee of an enterprise or organization such as a newspaper or news agency whose full-time occupation constitutes mental work for the purpose that ideas expressed in words or in pictures, either his own or those of others, are produced in print in the editorial part of the press or through sound reproduction.
>
> Provisions of this law are binding on editors both in private and public employment.[108]

The new law, in other words, recognized editors (journalists) only as those individuals employed under a work contract, as opposed to freelancers who, according to one Union official's explanation, were excluded from Union membership because such affiliation, "as past experience has shown, was misused in many cases for purposes other than journalistic."[109] Thus, all full-time journalists had to be members of the SCSN and only its members could be employed by newspapers, periodicals or any governmental department or agency dealing with press affairs.

The law further stipulated that the right to be a journalist was reserved for Czechoslovak citizens at least 21 years old who had not been deleted from the electoral rolls or sentenced according to presidential decrees covering offenses against the nation's honor, i.e., as Nazi criminals, traitors or collaborators.

Soon after liberation a cleansing commission had been created by the Syndicate of Czech Journalists (forerunner of the SCSN) whose task it was to investigate the activities of all journalists during the occupation years. The commission included "several persons who had found protective refuge in the Communist Party to cover their own wartime collaborationist activities."[110] Such individuals depended on the Party for their position and could easily be persuaded to do its bidding. Actually, seven wartime editors were sentenced to death by national courts for their collaboration and several others were given prison terms. Another 83 journalists were expelled from the journalists' organization. The purpose of the cleansing process was "not only to justly punish the guilty, but also to account for the past. Traitors were expelled from the ranks of journalists, the rest were given the opportunity to prove that they deserved the trust and honor of being journalists in the liberated Republic," a Communist publicist later explained. "This was one of the most significant provisions which simultaneously was to assure the strengthening of the progressive line of the press."[111] The reference to "accounting for the past" can be taken to refer to strong anti-Communist sentiments expressed by some journalists during the interwar period.

The Union of Journalists was constituted as an autonomous corporation as early as March, 1946, with a Czech and Slovak section headquartered in Prague and Bratislava, respectively. Aside from representing and protecting the ideological and material

interests of its members in particular and the press in general, the SCSN was entrusted with these specific tasks:

a) To defend the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution;
b) To make possible the establishment of a democratic, free and reliable information [reportorial] service;
c) To assure that members conduct their duties in connection with their responsibilities to the public without interfering with the freedoms outlined under letter *a*);
d) To maintain records of members and, during arising disputes, decide whether or not conditions under paragraphs 1 and 2 [pertaining to members' responsibilities and membership qualifications] have been complied with.[112]

The Union's two sections were united under a supreme body, called the Central Union of Czechoslovak Journalists, which in turn was under the supervision of the Ministry of Information to the extent of "ensuring that they [the two sections] do not infringe upon the law or regulations based on it."[113] As may be readily seen, the Union possessed both regulatory and disciplinary powers over its members, providing it with the desired potential for influencing the daily life and work of practicing journalists. Eventually, every professional field was similarly organized and when the Communist Party came to power was used in implementing its plans.

The Communist-dominated trade union movement also put the non-Communist press at a disadvantage. Virtually every aspect of newspaper production, from paper mills to editorial offices, was in one way or another influenced by Communist labor leaders. An organized network of workers could apply "upward pressure" and, at times, actually impose censorship on non-Communist papers. Upon the Party's direction, for example, union leaders would persuade paper mill employees to refuse delivery of newsprint to non-Communist publications and induce printers to cease setting type until a given article critical of KSC policy or of the Soviet Union was either spiked, revised or, if published, retracted.[114]

The reorganization of the press drew bitter attacks from democratically inclined editors, but under the circumstances their protests were unavailing. Maintenance of the tenuous accord among the parties of the National Front had to be assured, a fact which tended to restrict press content as did the "sacred cow" topics of the Soviet Union and its fundamental institutions, as well as the internal two-year economic reconstruction plan initiated in

October, 1946. Also, criticizing the new provisions was difficult because Benes generally favored them. Many non-Communist journalists felt that maintaining the Republic's independence and neutrality rested in the hands of the President; thus, to criticize the new system meant to oppose Benes, which could only benefit the Communists.

The political situation in Czechoslovakia reached the crisis stage early in 1948, culminating in President Benes' resignation and the ascension of Gottwald and the Communist Party to total power by the end of February. The last remaining hurdles to Kopecky's effort to transform the press along Communist lines were removed, and the process of reorganization accelerated. As a direct result, many of the traditions, customs and practices developed by the nation's press during the previous 100 years—especially freedom of expression—were scrapped, and a new set of standards and guidelines was imposed by the Party in an effort to mold the newly established People's Democracy into a Socialist state.

Postscript

SINCE the change in the country's political orientation in 1948, the Czechoslovak press has experienced a turbulent existence. During the first quarter of its second hundred years, it has encountered disgrace and humiliation as well as euphoria. The former is exemplified by the early 1950s when the press succumbed to almost total Russification, while the latter occurred when the nation's print media (especially the cultural press) stood in the vanguard of the reform movement of the 1960s that culminated in what since has become known as the phenomenon of the Prague Spring.* It was during this significant and memorable segment of its history, almost a decade ago, that the Czech and Slovak press regained its freedom for a brief six months and displayed once again on its pages the spirit of Havlicek and Stur, a frequently suppressed but enduring trait that has made the press the nation's conscience during political and moral upheaval.

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*For a detailed study of this period and the antecedent events see this author's *Winter Into Spring: The Czechoslovak Press and the Reform Movement 1963-1968*, scheduled for publication in 1977.

FOOTNOTES

1. Milena Berankova, *Ceske novinarstvi narodniho obrozeni* (Czech Journalism of the National Revival) (Prague: Statni pedagogicke nakladatelstvi, 1965), p. 61.

2. Vladimir Klimes, *Pocatky ceskeho a slovenskeho novinarstvi* (The Beginnings of Czech and Slovak Journalism) (Prague: Orbis, 1955), p. 169.

3. Josef Volf, "Dejiny novin a casopisu: I. Do roku 1848" (The History of Newspapers and Periodicals: Part I - Until the Year 1848) in *Ceskoslovenska Vlastiveda*, Dil. VII: *Pisemnictvi* (Czechoslovak National Study, Vol. VII: Literature), Vaclav Dedina, ed. (Prague: Sfinx, 1933), p. 430.

4. The name derives from the legendary sage Prince Krok whose three daughters were individually the embodiment of Czech scholarship (namely the natural sciences, history and philosophy) and jointly personified the art of poetry.

5. Volf, "Dejiny novin a casopisu," p. 433.

6. Berankova, *Ceske novinarstvi narodniho obrozeni*, p. 80.

7. Joseph F. Zacek, "Nationalism in Czechoslovakia" in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer, eds., Far Eastern and Russian Institute Publications on Russia and Eastern Europe, No. 1 (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1969), p. 189.

8. Frano Ruttkay, "Ludovit Stur klasik slovenskeho novinarstva" (Ludovit Stur, Classic of Slovak Journalism) *Novinarsky sbornik*, X, No. 3 (1965), p. 300.

9. Berankova, *Ceske novinarstvi*, p. 85.

10. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 86.

11. Volf, "Dejiny novin a casopisu," p. 433. Also see Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology*, 2nd ed., revised (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), pp. 90-98.

12. Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, p. 24.

13. Volf, "Dejiny novin," p. 434.

14. Milena Berankova, *Cesky burzoazni tisk v druhe polovine 19. stoleti* (The Czech Bourgeois Press in the Second Half of the 19th Century) (Prague: Statni pedagogicke nakladatelstvi, 1964), p. 27.

15. The article is reprinted in Vaclav Prochazka, *Karel Havlicek Borovsky* (Prague: Svobodne slovo, 1961), pp. 230-34. (Quote appears on page 231.)

16. Alexander Bach was appointed Minister of the Interior in 1849 and ruled as virtual dictator of Austria's domestic affairs. The "Bach system" was in effect until his dismissal in July, 1859.

17. Quoted in Berankova, *Cesky burzoasni tisk*, p. 35.

18. Karel Hoch, "Dejiny novin a casopisu: II. Od roku 1860 do doby soucasne" (The History of Newspapers and Periodicals: Part II - From 1860 to the Present) in *Ceskoslovenska Vlastiveda*, Dil. VII: *Pisemnictvi* (Czechoslovak National Study, Vol. VII: Literature), Vaclav Dedina, ed. (Prague: Sfinx, 1933), p. 449.

19. Berankova, *Cesky burzoasni tisk*, pp. 91-2.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

21. The press law of 1862 stipulated that the "responsible editor," not necessarily the true editor-in-chief, was the person responsible for the paper's content. If an article constituted a breach of the law, it was the responsible editor who was held to answer in court unless he revealed the author's name.

22. Frantisek Roubik, "K vyvoji casopisectva v cechach v letech 1863-1895" (On the Development of Journalism in Bohemia Between 1863-1895) in his *Bibliografie casopisectva v cechach z let 1863-1895* (Bibliography of the Periodic Press in Bohemia 1863-1895) (Prague: Ceska academie ved a umeni, 1936), p. VII.

23. *Ibid.*, p. IX.

24. Jan Nahlovsky, *Casopisy v Ceskoslovenske Republice* (Periodicals in the Czechoslovak Republic) (Prague: Statni Urad Statistiky, 1923), pp. 20-21.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-3.

26. Josef Vejvara, *Historie spolku ceskych zurnalistu v praze: 1877-1927* (History of the Organization of Czech Journalists in Prague: 1877-1927) (Prague: Spolek ceskych zurnalistu, 1927), p. 9.

27. Vojtech Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari: Z poznamek a vzpominek* (Newspapers and Newsmen: From Notes and Recollections) (Prague: Nakladatelstvi politicke literatury, 1963), p. 296.

28. S. Harrison Thomson, *Czechoslovakia in European History* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), p. 276.

29. Hoch, "Dejiny novin a casopisu," p. 493.

30. Cyrill Merhout, ed., *Dokumenty nascho osvobozeni* (Documents of Our Liberation) (Prague: Bedrich Koci, 1919), p. 50.

31. Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, *The Making of a State: Memories and Observations, 1914-1918*, an English version arranged and prepared by Henry Wickham Steed (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1927), p. 373.

32. Karel Capek, *Hovory s T. G. Masarykem* (Conversations with T. G. Masaryk) (Prague: Ceskoslovensky spisovatel, 1969), p. 110.

33. Z. A. B. Zeman, *Prague Spring* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), p. 42. For a detailed explanation of the writer-journalist concept, see: Herbert Passin, "Writer and Journalist in the Traditional Society," in *Communication and Political Development*, Lucian W. Pye, ed., Studies in Political Development, No. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 82-123; and Frank L. Kaplan, "The Writer as Political Actor in Czechoslovak Society: A Historical Perspective," *East European Quarterly*, VII: 199-220 (September 1973).

34. Robert J. Kerner, ed., *Czechoslovakia: Twenty Years of Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1940), p. 132.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

36. Foreign news was supplied in large part by *Ceskoslovenska tiskova kancalar*, the Czechoslovak News Agency (CTK), a state owned news service established in 1918 as a successor to the Prague bureau of the Austrian News

Agency (Korbyro). CTK had agreements with major world wire services, and prior to World War II its staff consisted of 47 editors and reporters.

37. Eduard Bass, "The Czech Reads His Papers in Cafes," *World's Press News*, July 21, 1938, p. 29.

38. Albin E. Johnson, "Czech Journalism Encouraged by Government Expenditure," *Editor & Publisher*, August 17, 1929, p. 24.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, p. 13.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

42. Paul E. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1948*. Praeger Publications in Russian History and World Communism, No. 129 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), pp. 17-18.

43. The intent of the directive to Bolshevize, adopted during Comintern's Fifth Congress of 1924, was to have all member parties adopt the characteristics of the Russian Communist Party, in both their organizational structure and tactics. The drive toward uniformity within the international Communist movement was aimed specifically at providing Soviet leaders with greater possibilities for control over the activities of individual Communist parties.

44. Ustav Dejin Komunisticke Strany Ceskoslovenska, *Prirucni slovnik k dejinam KSC* (Encyclopedia of the History of the KSC), 2 vols., (Prague: Nakladatelstvi politicke literatury, 1964), I, p. 118 and II, p. 889.

45. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics*, p. 23.

46. Kenneth E. Olson, *The History Makers: The Press of Europe from Its Beginnings through 1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), pp. 358-9.

47. For an analysis of Comintern's mechanism of control over the press of its sections, see Frank L. Kaplan, "The Communist International's Press Control from Moscow," *Journalism Quarterly*, 48: 315-25 (Summer 1971). For work in English on the formation of the KSC, see H. Gordon Skilling, "The Formation of a Communist Party in Czechoslovakia," *American Slavic and East European Review*, XIV, No. 3 (1955), pp. 346-58; and Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia*, especially Part I.

48. Zdenek Tobolka, *Za svobodu a socialismus: Padesat let Prava lidu prveho ceskeho socialistickeho deniku 1897-1947* (For Freedom and Socialism: Fifty Years of "People's Right," First Czech Socialist Daily 1897-1947) (Prague: Delnicke nakladatelstvi, 1947), p. 139.

49. Skilling, "The Formation of a Communist Party," p. 350.

50. Tobolka, *Za svobodu a socialismus*, p. 145. Also see Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, p. 43.

51. Frantisek Helesic, "K problematice prace Rudeho prava na prelomu 20. a 30. let" (Problems Surrounding the Work of "Red Right's" Editorial Dept. During the Late 1920s and Early 1930s) *Sesity novinare*, III, No. 3 (1968), p. 47.

52. *Ibid.*

53. The KSC actually exceeded the CSSD in membership and popularity until 1928 when the former's hardening line and narrow political program

caused it to lose ground. The Communist Party regained some of its popularity after 1935, however, as the Party joined the defense of the nation against the increasing threat of German fascism.

54. For a comprehensive account of literary relations between Czechoslovakia and Soviet Russia, see Milada Souckova, *A Literary Satellite: Czechoslovak-Russian Literary Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.)

55. Frantisek Helesic, "Rude pravo v obdobi upevnovani panstvi burzoazie a docasne stabilizace kapitalismu v Ceskoslovensku (Cast druha)" ("Red Right" and the Period of the Bourgeoisie's Consolidation of Power and the Transitory Stabilization of Capitalism in Czechoslovakia - Part Two) *Novinarsky sbornik*, V, No. 3 (1960), p. 344.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 334.

57. For studies pertaining to the history of the Communist press in Slovakia during the interwar period, see Josef Darmo, *Slovenska zurnalistike 1918-1938* (Slovak Journalism 1918-1938), II (Martin: Matica Slovenska, 1966), and Josef Darmo, "Pravda–bojovnik za marxisticku stranu a prava pracujucich (1920-1935)" (Pravda–Fighter for the Marxist Party and Workers' Rights [1920-1935]) *Novinarsky sbornik*, V, No. 4 (1960), pp. 473-92.

58. Darmo, "Pravda–bojovnik za marxisticku stranu," pp. 476-7. See also Ustav Dejin Komunisticke Strany Ceskoslovenska, *Prirucni slovnik k dejinam KSC* (Encyclopedia of the History of the KSC) 2 vols. (Prague: Nakladatelstvi politicke literatury, 1964), I, p. 217.

59. Helesic, "Rude pravo v obdobi upevnovani panstvi burzoazie," p. 315.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Darmo, "Pravda–bojovnik," p. 475.

63. Helesic, "K problematice," p. 41.

64. Because both Germany and Czechoslovakia were considered imperialist powers by the KSC, a war between the two could be looked upon only as an imperialist war in which neither side should be supported.

65. Stanislav Budin, [Untitled memoirs], I (Prague: 1968), p. 191 (Copy of typewritten manuscript). I am indebted to Mr. Karel Jezdinsky for allowing me to read his copy of the manuscript.

66. Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, p. 53.

67. Budin, [Untitled memoirs], p. 181.

68. The seven signing the manifesto were Josef Hora, Marie Majerova, Helena Malirova, St. K. Neumann, Ivan Olbracht, Jaroslav Seifert and Vladislav Vancura. A few of the above regained their Party status after World War II while the others, for the most part, continued to sympathize with the Party's basic socialist aims.

69. Frantisek Helesic, "Skutecni sefredaktori a redaktori Rudeho prava 1920-1938" (Actual Chief Editors and Editors of "Red Right" 1920-1938) *Prispevky k dejinam KSC*, VII, No. 5 (1967), p. 744.

70. Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, p. 45.

71. Examples of such articles include "The Communist Press in the Struggle Against the War," *Communist International* (London), IX, Nos. 4-5

(March 1932), pp. 131-7, and G. Smolyansky, "The Chief Obstacles to the Work of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia," *Communist International* (London), X, No. 16 (August 1933), pp. 551-6.

72. Stanislav Budin joined the KSC during the interwar period. He was active in the Communist youth movement and later became a publicist, editing *Rude pravo* for a 16-month period during the mid 1930s before being dismissed from his post and expelled from the Party. During the war years he worked in New York, returning to Czechoslovakia after Germany's defeat. Never regaining his Party membership, he nevertheless continued working as a journalist, writer and publicist until he became an editor of *Reporter*, a magazine published by the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists from 1966 until its demise three years later. Budin retired in 1969 after 35 years in journalism.

73. Quoted in Frantisek Helesic, "Komunisticti novinari a levicova kultura" (Communist Newsmen and Leftist Culture) *Sesity novinare*, III, No. 3 (1968), p. 90.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

75. The Left Front movement, an umbrella-type organization including writers, artists and professionals, was created at the insistence of the KSC to attract the middle-of-the-road strata of the intelligentsia. During 1930 the LF was composed of seven organizations with 560 members, of whom 300 were in Prague and 150 in Brno. Although a Communist front organization, it was not directly controlled by the KSC and, more often than not, articles appearing in its publications opposed Party policy on culture and control of the creative process.

76. Quoted in Helesic, "K problematice," p. 59.

77. Budin, [Untitled memoirs], p. 268.

78. Kopetsky [*sic*], V[aclav], "Concerning the 'Rude Pravo'—Central Organ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia," *Communist International* (New York), XIII, No. 3 (March 1936), p. 474.

79. Tomas Pasak, "Problematika protektoratniho tisku a formovani tzv. skupiny activistickych novinaru na pocatku okupace" (Problems of the Protectorate Press and the Formation of the So-called Group of Activist Journalists at the Beginning of the Occupation) *Prispevky k dejinam KSC*, VII, No. 1 (1967), p. 54.

80. Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, p. 422. Also see Vladimir Hudec, "Journalism in Liberated Czechoslovakia Thirty Years Ago," *The Democratic Journalist* (Prague), Nos. 7-8 (1975), p. 21.

81. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia*, p. 73.

82. Hudec, "Journalism in Liberated Czechoslovakia," p. 20.

83. Petr Zenkl, "Communist Seizure of Power and the Press: Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948," in *Communist Penetration and Exploitation of the Free Press*, Committee Print of the U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 42.

84. Pasak, "Problematika protektoratniho tisku," pp. 64-5.

85. Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, pp. 420-23.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 422. Another source indicates that the number of illegally published—"in the most varied mutations"—issues of *Rude pravo* discovered after the war was 61. See Hudec, "Journalism in Liberated Czechoslovakia," p. 20.

87. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia*, p. 75.

88. For a brief study of the underground press, see also Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Joseph Skalda: Underground Editor* (Roxbury, Mass.: 1944.)

89. Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, p. 399.

90. Jaroslav Koutek, "The Clandestine Press in Struggle," *The Democratic Journalist* (Prague), No. 9 (1975), p. 22.

91. Hudec, "Journalism in Liberated Czechoslovakia," p. 20.

92. The postwar reconstruction plan of the Czechoslovak government, known as the Kosice Program, was formulated by the KSC leadership in Moscow and approved by President Benes without any significant changes. Moreover, the Communists gained a solid footing in the new government by securing eight of the top 25 posts, including two vice premierships and five ministries—Interior (police), Information, Education, Agriculture, and Labor-Social Welfare. In addition, a KSC member was named deputy to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a left-wing Social Democrat backed by the Communists received the premiership. The fact that Prague was liberated by Soviet troops and Benes returned to the country from his exile in London via Moscow provided the Communist Party with valuable psychological advantage during the months following the end of the war.

93. Libuse Sumavska, "Pohled na vyvoj ceskeho tisku od r. 1945" (A Glance at Development of the Czech Press from 1945) *Novinarsky sbornik*, X, No. 1 (1965), p. 9.

94. Quoted in K[arel] F. Zieris, *The New Organization of the Czech Press*, trans. G. Bohdan (Prague: Orbis, 1947), p. 8.

95. *Svobodne slovo*, July 28, 1945, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

96. Olson, *The History Makers*, p. 361.

97. Jaroslav Kladiva, *Kultura a politika /1945-1948/* (Culture and Politics /1945-1948) (Prague: Svoboda, 1968), p. 278.

98. Dolejsi, *Noviny a novinari*, p. 444.

99. *Ibid.*, 443-44, 446.

100. Jaroslav Vesely, "Vyvoj ceskoslovenskeho tisku, jeho struktura a perspektiva" (Development of the Czechoslovak Press, Its Structure and Perspective) *Novinarsky sbornik*, VI, No. 2 (1961), p. 127.

101. *Ibid.*

102. Kladiva, *Kultura a politika*, pp. 111-12.

103. Vesely, "Vyvoj ceskoslovenskeho tisku," p. 127.

104. *Ibid.*

105. Zieris, *The New Organization of the Czech Press*, pp. 19ff.

106. Kladiva, *Kultura a politika*, p. 279.

107. *Ibid.*

108. *Sbirka zakonu a narizeni republiky Ceskoslovenske* (Collection of Laws and Statutes of the Czechoslovak Republic), No. 101/1947, p. 519.

109. Zieris, *The New Organization of the Czech Press*, p. 52.

110. Josef Korbel, *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948: The Failure of Coexistence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 143.

111. Sumavska, "Pohled na vyvoj ceskeho tisku," p. 10.

112. *Sbirka zakonu a narizeni*, No. 101/1947, p. 521.

113. *Ibid.*

114. Zenkl, "Communist Seizure of Power and the Press," p. 51.